



# STATE OF IOWA

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IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION  
BETH TOWNSEND  
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## Press Release

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### *FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## Racial Profiling Complaint Ends in Settlement with Iowa Law Enforcement Agency

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC) has reached a settlement in a complaint against a municipal police department alleging discriminatory policing practices. The police department is located in a town with approximately 4000 residents in an Iowa county with a high Latino population. The ICRC filed a commission-initiated complaint based upon an informal complaint alleging an officer routinely made traffic stops based on the national origin of the registered owner or driver of the car. According to the person who made the informal complaint, the officer's actions constituted a pattern of behavior that resulted in a disproportionately higher number of stops, citations, and arrests for Hispanics.

The municipal police department denied all allegations in the complaint. No determination of probable cause was made by ICRC. The parties reached a predetermination resolution in a good faith effort to amicably resolve existing disputes.

The parties arrived at a settlement agreement that includes a number of provisions. To begin, the municipal police department agreed to changes in their current "Racial Profiling and Biased Policing" policy including how the department will respond to citizen complaints of discrimination. The department agreed to provide a factsheet to the public written in both English and Spanish which includes the following information: the definition of racial profiling; a description of the department's racial profiling policy; details on how to file a complaint with the department or the ICRC; and an explanation of the process the department uses to investigate such a complaint. The factsheet will be available at the police station and posted on the department's website. The department further agreed that all officers will undergo training as it relates to the revised racial profiling policy and record-keeping policies. The department agreed all officers will be required to record their initial reasons for making each traffic stop for a period of two years. The settlement agreement requires the chief of police to perform an evaluation of each officer every 12-18 months and include in the evaluation a review of the statistical information regarding arrests, citations and written warnings of the police officer. The department agreed to report to ICRC the statistical information of officers' written warnings, citations, and arrests for a period of two years.

Beth Townsend, Executive Director of ICRC, applauded the settlement. "The settlement reached by the parties insures that there will be no racial profiling in this jurisdiction and the officers will

receive training regarding racial profiling to help them avoid situations that cause the public to question their objectivity. Additionally, the citizens of this jurisdiction will be assured that law enforcement officials for this municipality are better trained to avoid racial profiling in the first place as well as becoming more sensitive to issues relating to race or national origin. Finally, citizens of this community can be assured that they have an avenue for reporting complaints of discrimination or racial profiling and that the police department has in place procedures to insure proper investigation of the complaints and accountability of the officers.”

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